

Professional Development Policy and Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

- (1) This Policy provides the framework for professional development for all staff across the University.
- (2) The purpose of professional development is to enhance personal and work performance, organisation and system outcomes, effective work relations and career development.
- (3) The University is committed to the continuing and equitable development of all staff members to facilitate the fulfilment of the University's primary goals as outlined in its Strategic Plan. It recognises the key role of professional development both to the efficient and effective operation of the University and to the work, career and personal goals of staff. It also recognises the key role of professional development in enabling gender equity and assisting managers in retaining staff and workplace planning.
- (4) The Professional Development Policy aims to give effect to the University's strategic priority for Staff which states:
 - a. To engage staff in a creative and rewarding learning community for the benefit of students, staff and other stakeholders.
- (5) The Professional Development Policy also aims to support and promote the University's values being:
 - a. knowledge and skills, and critical and imaginative inquiry for their capacity to transform individuals and the community;
 - b. equality of opportunity for students and staff;
 - c. diversity for its contribution to creativity and the enrichment of our lives;
 - d. cooperation as the basis of engagement with local and international communities;
 - e. integrity, respect and transparency in personal and collaborative action;
 - f. sound environmental stewardship for future generations; and
 - g. the pursuit of excellence in everything we do.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

- (6) This Policy is important to:
 - a. All staff;
 - b. Managers/ Supervisors; and
 - c. People and Culture.

Section 3 - Definitions

(7) Professional Development - A systematic approach to professional and career development to ensure that all staff have the on-going capabilities necessary to fulfill their position, develop themselves and their careers, adapt to change and assist in developing others.

(8) Professional Development Activities - Professional development occurs through a range of formal and informal work related activities. These include:

- a. Attendance at: Conferences, seminars, short courses (internal or external) or workshops;
- b. Participation in: Job exchanges, action-learning groups, committees or working parties, communities of practice, industry placement/visits, mentoring schemes (being mentored and acting as a mentor), coaching as a participant or a coach, subject or course meetings, in the special studies program or undertaking specific project/ consultancy work, courses or programs;
- c. Involvement in Work Integrated Learning: Job exchange, job rotation, shadowing, critical reflection on practice, professional reading, focused consultation with colleagues, obtaining and acting on feedback from students, clients and/or colleagues, networking, temporarily performing duties in another position or undergoing career counselling;
- d. Formal Studies: Studies for formal VET or higher education programs at undergraduate or postgraduate level, including research activities;
- e. Research/Writing: Obtaining a research grant or performing action research, study tours, preparing and publishing papers or books; or
- f. External Engagement: Service on external committees or working parties to an industry or professional association or involvement in community groups and activities.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

Context

(9) Professional development activities should benefit the individual staff member and the University by enhancing the skill and capability base of the relevant organisational unit including workforce planning. Managers/supervisors should work with their staff members to ensure that identified activities are consistent with priorities and requirements of the immediate work unit, the School/Faculty/Department the University. As a general principle, approval of professional development activities should not lead to any denial of service to client or compromise the effective operation of the University.

Alignment with the University Strategic Plan

(10) Professional development is part of the broader framework of the University's Strategic Plan. It aims to reflect current and projected needs of both the University and the individual staff member, providing support for career development and adapting to change and changing roles.

Participation

(11) All University staff are encouraged to participate in professional development activities. Some activities may be mandatory by agreement/(s), external legislation and/ or University Policy. Staff may be required to attend certain activities related to technological or organisational change and development.

(12) Participation in discretionary learning and development activities will normally be in line with agreed Staff Performance and Development Plans. The University will generally require an employee to have in place a Staff

Performance and Development Plan (which has been subject to rated review) when considering eligibility to participate in non-mandatory/ discretionary learning and development activity. Where appropriate, this requirement will be specified in Application forms for each particular activity. The gender equity aspirations of the University will also be taken into account when considering eligibility for participation in learning and development activities.

Responsibility

(13) The development of staff is a responsibility shared by individual staff members, manager/supervisor and the University. Specifically these responsibilities are:

Individual

(14) Professional development is a shared responsibility between the manager/supervisor and their staff member. Ultimately, each staff member is responsible for their own learning and development and is expected to manage their own personal and professional development, as well as contribute to the development of their colleagues through sharing their expertise/experiences.

(15) All staff are responsible for developing their capabilities and growing the depth and breadth of their skills, knowledge and abilities. By doing this, staff will often have more 'career freedom' as their options for job and career movement are usually expanded.

Supervisors

(16) Managers/supervisors are responsible for encouraging, coaching and enabling the staff members that they supervise to identify their learning and career development needs and to help them find and pursue activities to meet those needs. Managers and supervisors are expected to do their utmost to ensure access to relevant staff learning and development activities for individuals and groups of staff, subject to the operating requirements of the School/Faculty/Department.

(17) As leaders, managers/supervisors also need to engage in on-going professional development to continuously learn about, and enhance their own leadership and management practice.

University

(18) The University has a responsibility to provide relevant professional development activities and tools to ensure staff members have the capacity to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. This means: developing and maintaining the policy framework relating to professional development; monitoring the implementation of those policies; providing resources for learning and development activities; coordinating learning and development throughout the University and seeking resources from external bodies which provide additional funding for staff learning and development.

Equal opportunity

(19) Professional development plays an important role in the University's Gender Equity Strategy. Staff are usually eligible for learning and development in some form, and equal opportunity provisions apply to access and participation by all staff.

Section 5 - Procedures

All University Staff

Utilising University staff for professional development:

(20) Wherever possible, it is preferable that professional development services and activities are conducted by staff

members who are employed by the University. Sharing expertise with colleagues is an essential element of the collegial culture of the University and all staff members are expected to use their knowledge, skills and expertise to help develop their colleagues.

Confidentiality

(21) Participants and facilitators of professional development programs will consider the confidentiality of information shared, and personal privacy of others at all times. Where there is an explicit expectation of confidentiality (for example, where personal information will be exchanged), all participants should be notified at the start of the activity of this expectation and all participants and facilitators are expected to comply.

(22) Refer to the University's [Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) for further information.

Induction and Orientation

(23) All new staff members, including casual and sessional staff, must undergo an induction and orientation process on, or immediately following their commencement with the University that includes orientation to their workplace, the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour, Occupational Health & Safety induction and induction to their obligations regarding discrimination and harassment legislation and the University policies and practices relating to these areas. All new staff members should also be actively encouraged and supported by their manager/supervisor to attend a VU Induction Program.

(24) All new staff members should ensure they are fully aware of the existence of University statutes, policies and procedures and conversant with those applicable to their role within the University.

Funding of Staff Learning and Career Development Activities

(25) Funding for staff learning and career development activities must be identified, and the University's financial processing procedures applied. Sources of funding may include: University central funding/departmental budgets, including targeted allocations from DEST, OTTE, TAFE Development Centre; external funds including allocations through projects, grants and awards; and personal contributions by individual staff members.

Funding of Professional Development Activities by Cost Centres

(26) All cost centres should include in their budgets the costs of supporting the professional development of their staff members. The level of funding for professional development will vary from cost centre to cost centre but should take into account activities included in the agreed VU Develop Plans of the staff members in their cost centre.

(27) In general, the cost centre concerned will fund most routine professional development, such as attending conferences or updating skills required to undertake the work. Similarly, the cost centre concerned must meet study assistance grants from its annual budget allocation.

University fees

(28) University staff members are encouraged to enrol in VET, undergraduate or postgraduate courses offered by the University. Staff on a time fraction of 0.5 or more will not be charged the University's Student Services and Amenities Fee. Further, staff members will not be charged tuition fees for non-award single subjects and courses.

(29) HECS charges are not normally subject to exemption. However, HECS charges will be waived for staff undertaking the University's Graduate Certificate in Teaching (Tertiary).

Study assistance grants

(30) A Study assistance grant, to offset costs of study, is available to continuing/ongoing staff members and staff members who are employed on fixed term contracts of twelve months or more.

(31) This grant allows eligible staff to undertake courses of tertiary study, as approved in their professional development plan, on a part-time basis, at any institution.

(32) A Study assistance grant of up to \$500 per annum is available to eligible staff members successfully completing subjects/units that amount to 0.5 or more of a year's full-time study. Staff members studying units that amount to less than 0.5 of a full year's study are eligible for assistance on a pro-rata basis.

(33) Provision of a study assistance grant is conditional on successful completion of each subject/unit, or evidence of satisfactory progress if the case of staff undertaking a master's degree by research or a PhD without a HECS exempt scholarship.

(34) Applications for the grant, supported by evidence of subjects passed, should be made to the staff member's supervisor for recommendation and then referred to the cost centre manager for approval.

(35) Payment of study assistance grants is made via the payroll system on the authority of the staff member's cost centre manager/supervisor.

Career and professional development plans

(36) Staff members should meet at least annually, but preferably bi-annually, with their supervisor to develop and review career and professional development plans through the University's VU Develop process.

Completion of professional development activities

(37) Upon the completion of any professional development activity, staff members are expected to complete any evaluation and information sharing activities that have been agreed and negotiated between the staff member and their manager/supervisor and/or School/Faculty/Department. This may include but is not limited to:

- a. copies of seminar programs, agenda, papers and the like;
- b. discussion and feedback to colleagues;
- c. conducting an internal development session for the benefit of other staff members;
- d. an evaluation of the value and usefulness of the activity;
- e. evidence of satisfactory progress for study leave; and
- f. a report on the activity.

Management Training

(38) Staff members in roles that require people management or supervision will undertake mandatory training and development on identified areas such as EEO and conflict management. All staff members who are appointed to a senior position where they have not had previous people management responsibilities will be required to undertake training in an agreed time period as negotiated with their manager/supervisor.

Academic Staff

Induction and Orientation

(39) In addition to clause 4.1.3 above, all newly appointed teaching staff who are scheduled to teach at least 10 hours in a year, are required as a condition of their probation, to satisfactorily complete the prescribed ' Initial Induction Program ' for teaching staff.

(40) Additionally all newly appointed teaching staff with continuing or fixed term contract appointments are required to either satisfactorily complete the prescribed ' Extended Induction Program ' for teaching staff within the first three years of their employment or to gain exemption from this program. (Refer: [Learning and Teaching - Professional](#)

Research Active Academic Staff

(41) Research is considered by the University as an important aspect in the professional development of all academic staff. Academic staff may be classified as research active on the basis of their enrolment in a research degree. The maximum teaching load for research active staff will normally be lower than the load for non-research active academic staff.

Special Studies Program

(42) A special studies program (SSP) is a period of release from normal duties for a member of the academic staff to allow concentration on specific projects/ endeavour's. An SSP activity must clearly benefit both the University's national/international scholarly reputation and/or community service and engagement, and the individual's career development and work performance. Provisions for SSP are outlined in the [Special Studies Program Policy](#).

VE and HE Teachers

Induction and Orientation

(43) In addition to clause 4.1.3 above, all newly appointed teaching staff who are scheduled to teach at least 10 hours in a year, are required as a condition of their probation, to satisfactorily complete the prescribed ' Initial Induction Program ' for teaching staff.

(44) Additionally all newly appointed teaching staff with on-going, tenurable or contract appointments are required to either satisfactorily complete the prescribed 'Extended Induction Program' for teaching staff within the first three years of their employment or to gain exemption from this program. (Refer: [Learning and Teaching - Professional Development of Teaching Staff Procedure](#)).

Time Allocation for Professional Development

(45) The annual allocation of VE and HE teachers' workloads includes a minimum allocation of 30 hours of relevant professional development, including retraining and industrial release opportunities.

Sabbatical leave

(46) VE and HE teachers may apply for sabbatical leave of one year every 5 years. Staff members applying for this leave agree to a salary reduction of 20% for the relevant work period preceding the leave and enter into an agreement with their manager/supervisor which states the terms and conditions of the sabbatical leave (eg. by working full-time for four years and being paid at 80% EFT, VE and HE teachers accrue a year's sabbatical leave to be taken at 80% EFT salary in the fifth year). Leave is normally taken immediately following the completion of the relevant work period during which the salary was reduced. (Refer to the prevailing Victorian TAFE Multi Business Agreement (MBA) (current version).

Study leave

(47) VE and HE staff teachers may be granted study leave or industry release to obtain formal qualifications and skills directly related to progression through the skill-based career path. Study leave may be granted on a paid or unpaid basis. Applications for such leave shall not be unreasonably refused.

Professional Staff

Access to Career Development Opportunities

(48) The University is committed to improving and extending career development opportunities for staff members.

All professional staff members shall have access to appropriate and relevant career development opportunities which include both training and internal promotion opportunities.

Time Release to Attend Professional Development Activities

(49) Professional staff members will be entitled to time release from duties to attend relevant professional development activities as identified through their VU Develop Plans.

Study Leave

(50) Professional staff members who undertake an approved course of study directly related to their work are eligible to apply for study leave. The course undertaken must be approved, prior to enrolment, by the managers/supervisor as a course of study relevant to the staff member's agreed professional development plan.

(51) Staff members undertaking part-time studies in an approved course of study will be expected to undertake at least half of their lectures, classes, tutorials etc. in their own time. The following provisions apply to absences within standard office hours. Staff members undertaking courses using distance learning are also eligible to apply for study leave in accordance with these provisions. Standing arrangements for study leave are subject at all times to the work requirements of the organisational unit and the satisfactory work and study record of the staff member.

(52) In general terms, continuing/ongoing professional staff members employed on at least 0.5 time fraction who are undertaking an approved course of study (full or part-time study load) are eligible to apply for study leave as provided under the VU Enterprise Agreement. Managers will use their best endeavours to accommodate study leave, but may decline applications where it is likely to lead to denial of service to clients or the compromise the effective operations of the department/business unit.

(53) If these provisions are not sufficient to cover the course attendance needs for an individual staff member meeting all other requirements, then additional time may be granted on a 'make-up' basis by agreement between the staff member and their manager/supervisor.

(54) Managers/supervisors have a responsibility to organize workflow so that a staff member may attend scheduled tutorials etc. or take the allowed period of study leave. Whilst it is recognised that this will not always be possible and work will need, at times, to take priority over study leave, every attempt should be made to allow staff members to take such leave.

(55) Applications for study leave should be made directly to the staff member's manager/supervisor for approval. Access to, and approval of study leave will be in accordance with VU's Equity and Diversity Policy and Strategy. These provisions recognize the difficulties that staff face when undertaking part time study whilst employed by the University, particularly those staff with parental or carer responsibilities.

Professional Staff Development Fund

(56) The Professional Staff Development Fund (PSDF) is a fund established by the University to support the professional development of professional staff. In general terms, it is used to support activities that are directly related to the University's strategic goals but which lie outside the scope of activities normally funded by cost centre budgets (see Professional Staff Development Fund Guidelines).

Special Studies Program

(57) A special studies program (SSP) is a period of release from normal duties for professional staff at HEW 9 and above to allow concentration on specific projects/ endeavours. An SSP activity must clearly benefit both the University's national/international scholarly reputation and/or community service and engagement, and the individual's career development and work performance. Provisions for SSP are outlined in the [Special Studies Program Policy](#).

Professional Development Planning and Coordination

(58) Key providers of internal professional development initiatives and activities for University staff will meet at least twice each year to:

- a. discuss professional development needs and priorities;
- b. review existing programs and activities;
- c. identify new activities, programs and initiatives; and
- d. discuss and coordinate plans for professional development activities, programs and initiatives for the next 6 months and beyond.

(59) Meetings will be convened by the General Manager, People and Organisational Development and will include members of the University who are identified as key stakeholders, critical friends and potential contributors to the business of these meetings.

VU Leadership and Management Capability Framework

(60) The VU Leadership and Management Capability Framework has been developed to assist leaders and managers in their leadership roles at VU.

(61) The framework seeks to establish a shared understanding of the critical success factors that drive high performance leadership at VU. It outlines the core professional and management competencies as well as the leadership capabilities that enable VU leaders to excel. It should be used as a key resource to guide leadership and management development and practice at VU. Further details are outlined in the VU Leadership and Management Capability Framework .

Section 6 - Guidelines

(62) Professional Staff Development Fund Guidelines

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	14th August 2018
Review Date	14th August 2021
Approval Authority	Vice-President, People and Culture
Approval Date	10th August 2018
Expiry Date	20th July 2020
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